Construing the Dynamics of Human Relationships in the Fictions of Jhumpa Lahiri

A

SYNOPSIS

SUBMITTED TO

VEER KUNVAR SINGH UNIVERSITY, ARA

FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN ENGLISH

FACULTY OF ARTS

by

SHASHANK MISHRA

UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF

PROF. (DR.) KRISHNA KANT SINGH
PROFESSOR
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
VEER KUNVAR SINGH UNIVERSITY, ARA

Construing the Dynamics of Human Relationships in the Fictions of Jhumpa Lahiri

The two hundred year historical encounter between Indian and the western cultures gave rise to Indian English in writing. There was superfluity of writers who flourished and came to the picture without much ado. Prominent figures like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Romesh Chander Dutt, Aru and Toru Dutt, Henry Vivian Derozio, Rabindranath Tagore, Manmohan Ghose, Sarojini Naidu supplemented the scale of literary expressions written in Indian English. This genre has gained a pride of place universally as an exceptional mode of discourse. Manohar Malgonkar, Bhabani Bhattacharya, G.V.Desani, Kushwant Singh, Arun Joshi, Chaman Nahal, Anita Desai, Ruth Prawar Jhavwala, Kamala Markandaya, Gita Hariharan, Manju Kapoor, Shobha De, Nayantara Sahgal, and Attiah Hosain are notable names.

Jhumpa Lahiri as a diasporic writer plays a significant role in Indian English writing. With four works to her credit, she can be considered as one of the most prolific and promising post-colonial women writers. Her authorial world includes *Interpreter of Maladies* (1999), which is a collection of nine short stories, *The Namesake* (2003), a novel, *Unaccustomed Earth* (2008), a novella and *The Lowland* (2013) a novel again. She is possibly one of the most inventive and substantive writers in Indian English Fiction today. Her works can strikingly with captivate the human psyche and reveal the complications of immigration and displaced identity. But she is not just only constrained to the nuances of displacement; she is also equally concerned with the variety of human relationships and delves into its quintessence. Therefore the present study offers to critically scrutinize and analyse the study on human relationships that her works portray.

Importance of the proposed investigation

Jhumpa Lahiri is the only Indian-American to win Pulitzer Prize, the highest literary award of America for her debut collection of short stories *Interpreter of Maladies.* Her stories are contemporary, conforming to the complexities of human relationships and her characters are microcosm of the Indo-American diasporic community. She overtly explores the multifarious patterns of physiological, psychological, sociological, economic and spiritual relationships that the whole gamut of her characters exists.

Indian culture is tremendously multifaceted and therefore enthralling, on account of the atypical amalgamation of tradition and modernity. So has become the case with the United States of America. The montage of subculture has given rise to the concept of 'cultural pluralism'. Jhumpa carries the trait of both these huge multicultural lands which is expansively noticeable in her works.

With the exemption of some articles and few books on diasporic issues, there is hardly any exhaustive study Lahiri's works. An unabridged and inclusive study of human relationships has not been challenged so far and it is expected that an elaborate and profound research would be a gainful exercise and the outcome would be beneficial for further research.

Literature Review

Since Lahiri is an outstanding fiction writer with an enigmatic outpour, she has been talked about at-length in different newspapers throughout the world. To mention a few are The London Times, The New York Times, The Times of India, The Hindustan Times, Anand Bazaar Patrika etc.

Besides these, an broad but not complete analysis of Lahiri's works has been done by books like *Jhumpa Lahiri: The Master Story Teller* (2002) ed. by Suman Bala, *Jhumpa Lahiri: The*

Tale of Diaspora (2005) ed. by Indira Nityanandam and *Jhumpa Lahiri: Critical Perspectives* (2008) ed. by Nigamanda Das are collection of different essays contributed by various researchers. It is worth mentioning here that these books have analyzed her works only from the diasporic angle and no other issues have been highlighted. Moreover no in hand book is available on the explication of her latest novel *The Lowland*. Therefore a detailed comprehensive research work is still awaited. The present study aims at making a comprehensive and insightful study in this area and it is hoped that the work done will be a fruitful exercise.

Research Gap

As it is indicated in the review of the work done, no full-length, comprehensive research has been done so far exclusively on Jhumpa Lahiri in the context of human relationship. Moreover her latest novel *The Lowland* has not yet been explored in detail.

Aims and Objectives

The proposed study aims

1) To significantly scrutinize the four fictions of Jhumpa Lahiri in detail in the light of human relationships.
2) To trace the issues which are immensely significant and relevant to the contemporary fiction.
3) To trace the emergence and evolution of Indian English fiction.
4) To critically examine how Lahiri approaches the issues of man-woman relationship.
5) To see how the institution of marriage works in the contemporary scenario.
6) To throw light upon Lahiri's complex treatment of individuals in a relationship

7) To critically examine the societal determination and intervention; cultural emphasis of masculinity resulting in feminine subjugation.
8) To trace Lahiri's treatment of female characters, their separation from the feminine self and the resultant angst.

Methodology

The present study will use a mixture of theoretical, analytical, and comparative approaches. It will comprise contribution from books, journals, materials from internet, newspapers etc. The data source of this research is provided by all the works of Jhumpa Lahiri.

The dissertation has been tentatively divided into five chapters:

Chapter 1: Introduction

In this chapter an attempt will be made to trace the emergence and evolution of Indian English Fiction in a historical perspective. A brief literary overview of contemporary Indian English Fiction would also be done. This chapter would also include a brief biographical sketch of Jhumpa Lahiri and an account of her ongoing journey as an Indo-American fiction and short story writer and a master story teller.

Chapter II: Man-woman Relationship

Man and woman relationship has been one of the most debated and controversial issues in modern fiction. In patriarchal society, women have been defined as good only on the standard made by men. If they do not fit in it they are considered to be evil or characterless, in the sense that they do not follow what is right according to those codes of conduct. Indian women writers have discoursed on the forces of patriarchy on women. Lahiri is one of them. Her works contain quite an expanded

female world and a plethora of female characters. She meticulously delves into the feminine psyche and their struggle to assert themselves**.**

Chapter III: Marriage and Decentering Marriage

Lahiri's works explain the age-old institutions of family and marriage that have experienced terrific strain in modern times. The new definition of marriage suggests absolute sexual freedom, with no concept of marital commitment. Economic protection for wife seems to be the cornerstone of marriage in contemporary times, which appears more like an agreement than an existing or poignant relationship.

Chapter IV: Relationship of Parenthood and Siblinghood

Parent-Children and Sibling Relationship investigates the effects of the corruption, avarice, immorality and materialism on these relationships. The characters of parents and siblings in the works of Lahiri are multicoloured. Some are sensitive, considerate and caring while some are completely indifferent and driven by impulse.

Chapter V: Conclusion

It is hoped that wide-ranging incorporation of the previous chapters will present significant study of human relationships in the works of Jhumpa Lahiri.

TENTATIVE BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Texts:

1. Lahiri, Jhumpa. Interpreter of Maladies. New Delhi: Harper Collins Publisher India, 2005. Print.
2. …The Namesake. New Delhi: Harper Collins Publishers India, 2007. Print.
3. … Unaccustomed Earth. Noida: Random House India, 2009. Print.
4. …The Lowland. Noida: Random House India, 2013. Print.

Secondary Texts:

Agarwal, Malti. ed. *English Literature: Voices of Indian Diaspora*. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers,2009.

Ashcroft, Bill. et al. ed. The *Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures.* London: Routledge, 1989.

Barry, Peter. *Beginning Theory : An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory*. Manchester and New York : Manchester Univ. Press, 1995.

Barucha and Nabar. (ed.) *Mapping Cultural Spaces : Post-Colonial Indian Literature in English.* New Delhi : Vision Books, 1998.

Bhatnagar, Manmohan K. *Feminist English Literature*. New Delhi : Atlantic Publishers and Distributors, 2002.

Bhatnagar, Vinita D. *Readings in Indian English Literature : Nation, Culture and Identity*. New Delhi : Herman Publishing House, 2001.

Bradbury, Malcolm. (ed.) The *Novel Today : Contemporary Writers on Modern Fiction.* Glasgow : Fontanal Collins paperbacks, 1978, rpt. 1982.

Brooks, C. et al. (ed.) *Understanding Fiction.* Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey : Prentice Hall, 1959.

Burns, Robert. *The Art of Staying Happily Married*. London : Prentice Hall, 1963.

Chakraborty, Jaydeep. "Diasporic Dynamism in Representing India: The Narrative World of Jhumpa Lahiri". Nigamanda Das. ed Jhumpa Lahiri: Critical Perspectives. New Delhi: Pencraft International, 2008.

Chakravarty, Joya. *Indian Writing in English : Perspectives*. New Delhi : Atlantic Publishers and Distributors, 2003.

Chandra, N.D.R. *Contemporary Indian Writings in English: Critical Perceptions* Vol-II (New Delhi: Sarup & Sons, 2005).

Cuddon, J.A. *Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory* (New Delhi: Penguin Books,1999).

Das, Nigamananda. Jhumpa Lahiri: Critical Perspectives. New Delhi: Pencraft International, 2008.

de Beauvoir, Simon. *The Second Sex.* Translated and Edited H.M. Parshley. (New York: Vintage Books, Random House, 1974).

During, Simon. ed. *The Cultural Studies Reader*. London and New York: Routledge, 1999.

E.M.Forster, In the preface to Untouchable London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1935

Felicelli, Anita. "The Moment" in Jhumpa Lahiri's The Lowland. http//lareviewofbooks. Org/review/ October 9th, 2013.

Figueira, Dorothy M."False Consciousness and the Postcolonial Subject". ed Jasbir Jain Dislocations and Multiculturalisms. Jaipur and New Delhi: Rawat Publications, 2004.

Gandhi, Leela. *Postcolonial Theory: A Critical Introduction*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh U.P, 1998.

Giri, B.P. and Kar, Prafulla C. *Thinking Territory: Some Reflections*. New Delhi: Pencraft International, 2009.

Jain, Jasbir. ed. *Gendered Realities, Human Spaces: The Writing of Shashi Deshpande*. Jaipur and New Delhi: Rawat Publication, 2003.

Jhumpa Lahiri: Critical Perspectives. Ed. Nigamananda Das. New Delhi: Pencraft Internatioanl, 2008. Print.

K.R.Srinivasa Iyengar, "Forward" to G.S.Balarama Gupta's Mulk Raj Anand(A Study of His Fiction In Humanist Perspective) (Bareilly: Prakash Book Depot, 1974),

K.R.Srinivasa Iyengar, *Indian Writing in English* (New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1995)

K.R.Srinivasa Iyengar, *Indian Writing in English New Delhi*: Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1995

Kumar, Basvaraj. *Indian English Literature* Vol-I (New Delhi: Atlantic, 2002).

Kumar, Basvaraj. *Indian English Literature* Vol-IV (New Delhi: Atlantic, 2003).

Lahiri, Jhumpa. The Lowland. Noida: Random House Publication, 2013

Loomba, Ania. Colonialism/Postcolonialism. London: Routledge, 1998.

M.K.Naik, A History of Indian English Literature (New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1995

M.K.Naik, Ironic Vision Delhi: Sterling publishers, 1963

Manmohan Bhatnagar ed. Indian Writing in English Delhi: Atlantic Publishers, 1997

Meenakshi Mukharjee, *The Twice Born Fiction*(New Delhi: Heinemann Educational Book, 1971),

Nityanandam,Indira. *Jhumpa Lahiri: The Tale of the Diaspora*. New Delhi: Creative Books. 2005. Print.

Pandey, S. Nath. ed. *Contemporary Indian Women writers in English: A Feminist Perspective.* New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers, 1999.

Paul Verghese, *Problems of Indian Creative Writing in English* (Delhi: Book Enclave, 1998)

Prasanna, S. Sree. ed. *Silent Suffering and Unheard Agony in the Regional Writings on Women*. New Delhi: Sarup & Sons, 2008.

Ray, Bharati. *Women of India: Colonial and Post colonial Periods*. Volume ix, Part-3 (New Delhi: SAGE Publication, 2005).

Ray, Mohit K. *Indian Writing in English* (New Delhi: Atlantic, 2003).

Sehgal, Nayantara. "The Schizophrenic Imagination". Wasafiri. Volume 5, Issue 11, 1990: 17-20

Sharma, A. Kavita, Adesh Pal and Tapas Chakraborty. ed. *Interpreting Indian Diasporic Experience*. New Delhi: Creative Books, 2004.

Singh, Manjit Inder. *Contemporary Diasporic Literature: writing history, culture, self*. (New Delhi: Pencraft international, 2007).

Young, Robert J.C. *Postcolonialism: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: OUP, 2003.

Supervisor

Prof. (Dr.) Krishna Kant Singh
Professor
Department of English
Veer Kunwar Singh University, Ara

Research Scholar

Shashank Mishra
University Department of English
Veer Kunwar Singh University, Ara

****